

**Testimony by Dan Thompson, Executive Director, Wheaton Arts Parade (WAP)**  
**Montgomery County Council Hearing on FY23 Budget, April 21, 2022**

Before I begin, let me take a moment to thank all of you for your service. This is such a large county to manage, larger than some states, with myriad local priorities to balance. Special thanks to Councilmember Navarro for her years of service to my district and for her support of the arts in Wheaton.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee's (WUDAC) request that \$30K be added to the Urban District budget to help put on the Wheaton Arts Parade & Festival.

Many of you have walked in the parade, carrying art created by a local artist. This is an actual case of elected officials "walking the walk." Thank you.

Thanks to contributions from dozens of artists, local arts organizations, area schools, local businesses, county departments, and dedicated volunteers, in just 6 years, Wheaton has created an annual tradition. How do we know?

Google Wheaton MD and your search will find:

*"Multicultural Wheaton is one of Maryland's arts and entertainment districts that draws crowds to its annual Wheaton Arts Parade and Festival."*

But the parade is more than art. It attracts crowds to Wheaton. It markets Wheaton as a destination. It activates the Urban District.

The Urban District's request acknowledges that the county incurs expenses producing this event: police overtime, clean and safe team, DOT traffic controls, and a lot of planning and coordination by the town manager and other county employees. The WUDAC request suggests there are \$30K in unfunded costs.

Even with my pro-bono management and volunteers, the parade & festival cost about \$50,000 to produce. The cost of tents has risen by 50%. WAP's grant from the Arts Council is only \$8,000 this year. The tents alone will cost \$18,000. Our support from Westfield Wheaton has

fallen from \$5,000 to \$2,000. Some of this has been made up from donations from county departments like Planning, Parks, Recreation, and Environment.

The parade & festival have the potential to go on for many years. But not unless Wheaton lays the foundation for sustainability. Funds are needed to manage the event after my pro-bono service ends, and this raises a question.

Can the A&E District take on the management of the parade and festival?

It is unlikely the A&E District can manage anything without staff and without a board of advisors made up of artists and arts organizations.

There's no point of contact designated on any county website for the A&E District. Just recently, I learned that WUDAC is supposed to serve as the A&E advisory board, but nobody on WUDAC knows that and WUDAC's statute doesn't require representation by artists or arts organizations.

The A&E District has a much more narrow focus than WUDAC and an A&E board probably needs to meet more than 2 hours each month. But don't take my word for it. Have public meetings to discuss how to manage the A&E District.

Most of all, the A&E District needs an FTE for a Director to work under Luisa Cardona.

Current Urban District staff can't take on the A&E District because they already have a full plate. And it can't be managed from Silver Spring. It needs to be run by the Wheaton community.

I hope the county will get serious about the A&E District and create an FTE for a Director in the Urban District so **the county can sustain the Wheaton Arts Parade & Festival.**

For now, I urge you to provide the Urban District with the \$30K WUDAC requested in FY23 to support the Wheaton Arts Parade & Festival.

Attached, FYI is the budget for the September 25 event



# Wheaton

Multicultural Wheaton is one of Maryland's arts and entertainment districts that draws crowds to its annual Wheaton Arts Parade and Festival. Downtown teems with Asian restaurants, American diners, and pizzerias, and Westfield Wheaton mall has mainstream shops and department stores. Wheaton Regional Park's leafy trails can be explored by foot, bike or horseback, while the Adventure Playground is a hit with families. — Google

<b>2022 Wheaton Arts Parade &amp; Festival Budget</b>	
<b>REVENUES</b>	
Donations from local business & organizations	\$10,000
Donations from county govt agencies	\$6,000
Exhibition Tent Fees	\$7,500
Food Vendor Tent Fees	\$2,000
Grants (AHCMC Parade)	\$8,000
T-shirt sales	\$1,200
T-shirt logo	\$600
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$35,300</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
Advertising and Promotion (Chamber & Culture Spot)	\$250
Artist Commissions	\$870
Assistant Organizer(s) Contract	\$6,000
Wheaton Clean & Safe Team overtime	\$3,000
Dumpster	\$400
Exhibition Tents	\$18,000
Graphic Design	\$250
Insurance	\$1,335
Office Supplies	\$36
Organizer (in-kind)	\$45,000
PayPal fees	\$150
Permits	\$90
Photographer	\$500
Police Department overtime	\$4,000
Power	\$2,000
Printing	\$3,000
Social Media Manager	\$1,200

Sound Systems	\$2,000
Subscriptions (123 Forms, Microsoft, Adobe)	\$375
Supplies (floats & parade art)	\$2,500
Toilets & hand washing station	\$1,000
Traffic Controls	\$7,000
Transport (U-Haul rental)	\$300
T-shirts (ABC Tees)	\$1,800
Volunteer benefits (food coupon/T-shirt)	\$360
Workshop Instructors (Float making)	\$360
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$56,776</b>